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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 001354

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/29/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [PL](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: GOL READJUSTING IN IRAQ BASED ON SAME RATIONALE AS USG

REF: A. SECSTATE 231047

[B. VILNIUS](#) 1320

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Alexander Titolo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) We delivered ref A points on USG troop readjustments in Iraq to Ministry of Defense Undersecretary Renatas Norkus on December 28 and Vytautas Leskevicius, of the MFA's Security Policy Department, on December 29. Both officials said that the GOL's decision not to replace the detachment of approximately 50 troops that recently rotated out of the Polish sector does not represent any lessening of Lithuania's commitment to the Iraq mission. Our GOL interlocutors explained that Lithuania, like the USG, has based its readjustments in Iraq on its judgment that Iraqi Security Forces have increased their capabilities. Lithuania will maintain its contingent of approximately 50 troops serving with the Danes near Basrah, and will deploy three trainers to work with the Poles. The GOL also has two personnel with the NATO training mission in Iraq.

[¶2.](#) (C) Charge reviewed these readjustments with Minister of Defense Gediminas Kirkilas and Minister of Foreign Affairs Antanas Valionis December 30 at the changeover ceremony of the Baltic Air Policing mission. Kirkilas noted that a few voices in Lithuania's parliament are advocating for a complete withdrawal from Iraq, but characterized them as isolated and unrepresentative (ref B). He and Valionis said that they are fully confident that Lithuania, along with its key allies such as the United States and Poland, will see the Iraq mission through to its completion.

[¶3.](#) (C) Kirkilas emphasized to Charge the importance of Lithuania maintaining a presence of a few officers with Poland in Iraq in acknowledgment of the deep strategic partnership these nations enjoy. He noted that Lithuania's commitment to maintain a presence, albeit reduced, with the Poles in Iraq and Poland's assumption of Baltic Air Policing responsibilities underscore the strength of this cooperation.

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